

1949

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

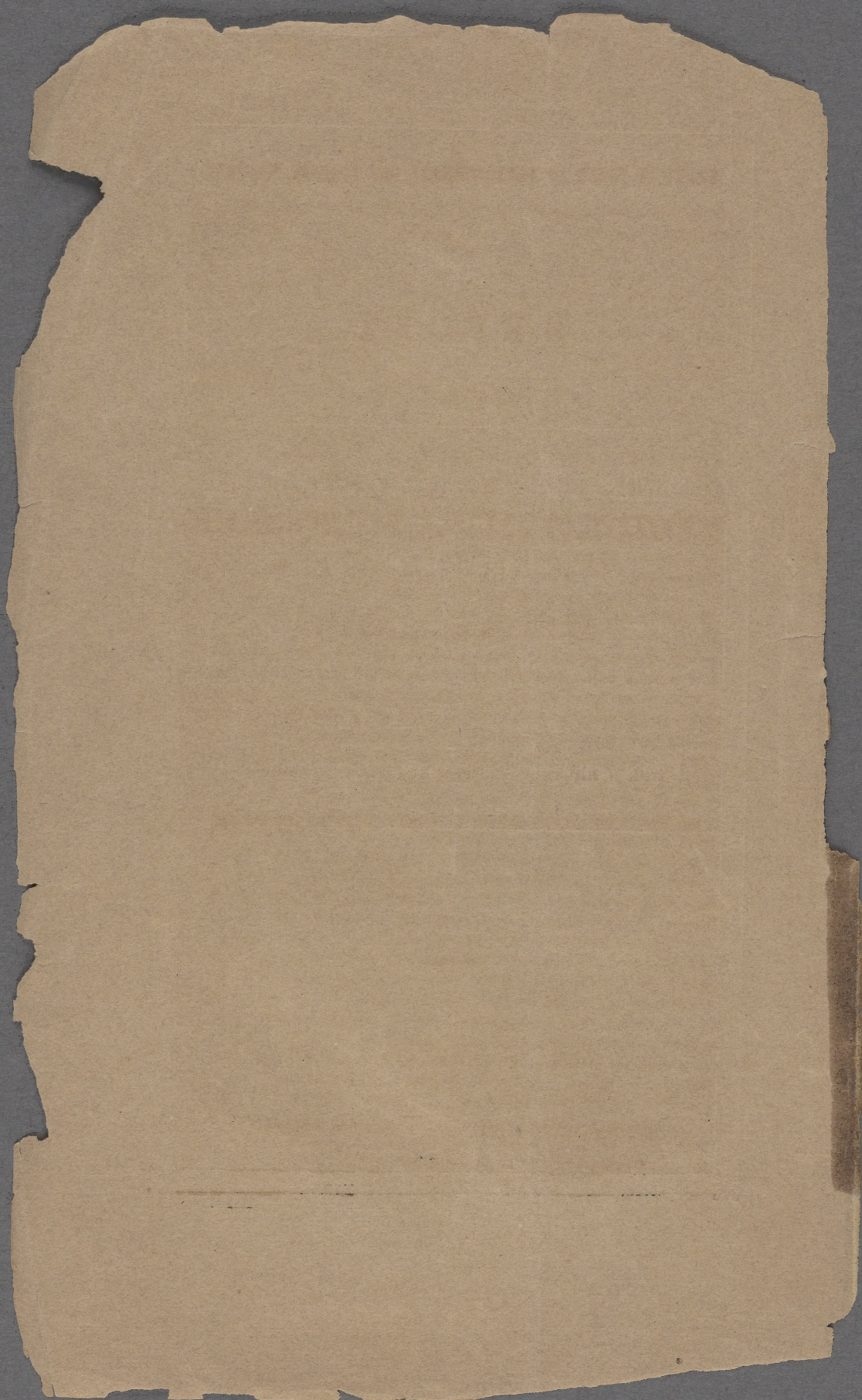
REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ANTI-SLAVERY MEMORIALS,

September, 1845.

With a Historical Statement of Previous Proceedings.



AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

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R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ANTI-SLAVERY MEMORIALS,

SEPTEMBER, 1845.

WITH A

HISTORICAL STATEMENT OF PREVIOUS PROCEEDINGS.



B O S T O N :

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 24 CONGRESS STREET.  
1845.

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS

# REPORT

## OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS

FOR THE YEAR 1845

HISTORICAL STATEMENT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

BOSTON:

WILLIS OF THE MARINE, 21 CORNHILL STREET.

1845

## REPORT, &c.

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At the Annual Meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, held in Worcester, September, 1844, sundry memorials relating to the alleged connection of the Board and the missions under its care with Slavery, were presented, and referred to a committee, consisting of the Rev. Drs. Woods, Tyler, Tappan, and Stowe, Chancellor Walworth, Hon. Thos. W. Williams, and Rev. Messrs. S. L. Pomroy, J. W. McLane, D. Sandford, and D. Greene. During that meeting the committee presented a Report, in part, which was adopted by the Board. In relation, however, to the admission of certain persons, holding slaves, to some of the mission churches, one of the topics introduced by the memorialists, the committee, not having knowledge of all the facts, asked to be continued, that they might obtain further information, and report at the next annual meeting. This request was granted. The desired information was obtained; and the committee met in Boston on the 27th of August last, when the draft of a Report, prepared in view of the information received, was presented; which, after a full discussion of the principles that should be adhered to in the case, was given into the hands of a sub-committee to be modified. This was done. The committee again met by adjournment in Brooklyn, on the morning of September 9th, and spent a large part of the day in considering the amended Report. After further discussion, and the suggestion of further alterations, the Report, in the form in which it is given on the following pages, was unanimously agreed upon on the 10th, and signed by all the members of the committee, except Mr. Pomroy, whose absence from the country deprived the committee of his aid.

It will be seen that the committee confined themselves to the one topic which was properly before them, except as others came incidentally in their way.

The Report was submitted to the Board on the morning of the 10th, and was discussed through the remainder of that day and evening, and through the forenoon of the following day; when,

with some proposed amendments, and the memorials which had been presented during the meeting, it was referred to a new committee, consisting of Chief Justice Williams, Rev. Drs. Tappan, Bacon, and Stowe, Rev. J. C. Webster, and D. Greene. On the morning of the 12th, after a consideration of the subject, this committee reported, recommending the adoption of the original Report, without amendment or addition. Some further discussion ensued in the Board, after which the vote on adopting the Report was taken by yeas and nays, and was unanimous in the affirmative.

### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

The Committee to whom, at the last annual meeting of this Board, were referred certain memorials relating to the Board's alleged connection with slavery, having been instructed to seek further information concerning the admission of slave-holders to churches under the care of the missionaries of the Board, have made the inquiries directed, and now ask leave to report.

The committee do not deem it necessary to discuss the general subject of Slavery, as it exists in these United States, or to enlarge on the wickedness of the system, or on the disastrous moral and social influences which slavery exerts upon the less enlightened and less civilized communities where the missionaries of this Board are laboring. On these points there is probably, among the members of the Board and its friends, little difference of opinion.

The committee propose to confine themselves mainly to a statement of some of the principles which should govern the Board and its missionaries in prosecuting their work so as to secure the highest measure of the divine approbation, and most effectually and speedily to accomplish the great object in view; together with a statement of the principal facts relating to the connection of persons holding slaves with mission churches under the care of the Board.

Among the principles which the committee would present for the consideration of the Board, and which they regard as fundamental, and to be adhered to in planning and conducting every mission undertaken under the authority of the great Redeemer and Head of the Church, are the following :

1. In the manner of preaching the gospel, judging of the evidences of piety in professed converts, gathering churches, administering the ordinances and exercising discipline, there should be a close conformity to the commission given by Christ to his followers, and to the recorded instructions and acts of his inspired apostles. These are found in the New Testament, and are the models and the laws, which, in all important matters, are

to govern those who propagate the gospel and minister to the churches in Christ's name.

2. The primary object aimed at in missions should be to bring men to a saving knowledge of Christ, by making known to them the way of salvation through his cross. It has regard to individual character, and is an object simple in itself and purely spiritual. The commission given by Christ evidently contemplates the work to be done as one that is to be wrought in individual men, regarded as rational and immortal beings; all of whom, of every grade and condition, having great interests alike, the more important of which lie in another state of existence. To these interests, primarily and mainly, and to that change of individual character and conduct which is indispensable to secure them, the Christian missionary is to direct his labors. If other objects less spiritual and important are connected with the enterprise as predominant objects of interest and pursuit, they impair its efficiency and endanger the great result.

3. As the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper are obviously designed by Christ to be means of grace for all who give credible evidence of repentance and faith in him, these ordinances cannot scripturally and rightly be denied to professed converts from among the heathen, after they shall have given such evidence.

4. The missionaries, acting under the commission of Christ, and with the instructions of the New Testament before them, are themselves, at first, and subsequently, in connection with the churches they have gathered, the rightful and exclusive judges of what constitutes adequate evidence of piety and fitness for church fellowship in professed converts. They alone can be fully acquainted with all the circumstances affecting the development of piety in individuals, and intelligently form an opinion how far they are aiming to conform their character and conduct to the doctrines and precepts of the Bible.

5. Both before and after professed converts are received to church fellowship and the ordinances are administered to them, the missionaries should give them such instructions from the gospel as they believe to be, in their circumstances, best adapted to nurture and develop all the Christian graces, and lead to the practice of all the Christian duties. The indulgence of any known sin and the neglect of any known duty is to be decidedly discountenanced.

Such your committee deem to be the divinely established principles according to which the missionary work among unevangelized nations should be prosecuted; and in this simple manner only, as it seems to them, can the thoughts and feelings of the heathen and other unevangelized communities be so turned towards God and their relations to him, and be brought into such a spiritual relation to the Lord Jesus Christ, as will at length

lead to the correction of all the social wrongs and disorders which now, in various forms, so much afflict the benighted and idolatrous portions of our race.

Civil and religious liberty, improvement in civilization and the arts of life, and the introduction of the best social institutions, admitted to be indispensable to the highest well-being of a community, are still secondary to the one primary object of securing holiness in the hearts of individuals. Aiming steadily at this is the way for the missionary most surely and speedily to work out the others; and your committee believe that it is only by regarding these classes of objects in their proper relations, and keeping them in their proper places, and pursuing them in their proper order, that either can be effectually attained and permanently established on the broad field of the world.

In respect to the social and moral evils with which missionaries are to come into contact in prosecuting their work among the benighted nations, and in relation to which the foregoing principles are believed by your committee to apply, it should be borne in mind that they are by no means few, or of limited territorial extent. The evils of slavery will probably be met in some form, in nearly every part of the great missionary field, and the principles adopted must affect the whole scheme for evangelizing the world; and are, therefore, of the utmost importance, and should be most carefully examined and settled. The unnatural state of society in which these evils originate is one of the consequences of human depravity—of that all-absorbing selfishness—that predominance of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, which are developed in our fallen nature. This state of society is to be rectified by diminishing the power of that terrible principle in which this, as well as all other wickedness and moral disorders originate. Involuntary servitude is believed to pervade nearly the whole of the African continent, though with widely different degrees of severity. In some form it exists in many, if not all parts of India. It pervades Siam and nearly all Mohammedan communities; and it will probably be found, in some of its modifications, in China and Japan.

The unrighteousness of the principles on which the whole system is based, and the violation of the natural rights of man, the debasement, wickedness, and misery it involves, and which are in fact witnessed, to a greater or less extent, wherever it exists, must call forth the hearty condemnation of all possessed of Christian feeling and sense of right, and make its entire and speedy removal an object of earnest and prayerful desire to every true friend of God and man. This object, as your committee believe, can be effected in no other manner, than by the prevalence, in these communities, of that regard for justice and human rights and that humane and philanthropic feeling of which Christian knowledge and piety are the only permanent basis.

But slavery is not the only social wrong to be met in the progress of the missionary work, and to which the principles which are adopted in prosecuting that work must probably be applied. There are the castes of India, deeply and inveterately inwrought in the very texture of society, causing to the mass of the people hereditary and deep degradation, leading to the most inhuman and contemptuous feelings and conduct in social life, and presenting most formidable barriers to every species of improvement. There are also the unrestrained exactions, made in the form of revenue, or of military or other service, connected with a species of feudalism, prevailing in many unenlightened communities, which are most unrighteous in their character and paralyzing in their influence, and cause unlimited distress to individuals and families. There are also those various forms and degrees of oppression, whether of law or of usage, prevailing under the arbitrary governments which bear sway over the larger part of the earth's surface. So that the principles which we draw from the word of God for our guidance as a missionary society, are not for use among a few pagan tribes merely, but among nearly all the benighted nations of the earth.

Is this Board, then, in propagating the gospel, to be held responsible for directly working out these reorganizations of the social system, without giving Christian truth time to produce its changes in the hearts of individuals and in public sentiment, and without being allowed to make any practical use of those most effective influences which are involved—in respect to all who have grace in their hearts—in the special ordinances of the gospel? Or, should it be found, as the result of experience, that souls among the heathen are, in fact, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, before they are freed from all participation in these social and moral evils, and that convincing evidence can be given that they are so regenerated,—then may not the master and the slave, the ruler and the subject, giving such evidence of spiritual renovation, be all gathered into the same fold of Christ? And may they not all there and in this manner, under proper teaching, learn the great lesson (so difficult for partially sanctified men to learn) that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free; but that all are one in him? And may they not, under these influences, have effectually nurtured in them those feelings of brotherly love, and that regard for each other's rights and welfare, in which alone is found the remedy for all such evils? Under such influences may not the master be prepared to break the bonds of the slave, and the oppressive ruler led to dispense justice to the subject, and the proud Brahmin fraternally to embrace the man of low caste; and each to do it cheerfully, because it is humane and right, and because they are all children of the great household of God? By such influences, mainly, is not the great moral transformation to be wrought in

the master and the ruler, in the bondman and the oppressed, all-important to both, and the only sure guaranty for permanent improvement in the social character and condition of either?

In proceeding on these principles the missions under the care of this Board and the churches gathered by them, are no otherwise connected with slavery, than they are with every other evidence and result of imperfect moral renovation in their converts and church members; and they no more really give their sanction to the one, than they do to all the others. Wherever the gospel is brought to bear upon the community where slavery or any other form of oppression exists, its spirit is decidedly adverse to such a state of things, tending to mitigate the evils of it while it continues, and ultimately, and in the most desirable manner, wholly to do it away,—not by constraint, nor with violence; but on those principles of Christian love which this Board and its missionaries are seeking to implant in every bosom, and to invest with all possible power to govern the hearts and the conduct of men.

Such is the view which your committee take of the missionary work, and such are the principles which, it seems to them, should be adhered to in prosecuting it. How far ecclesiastical bodies in this country may properly instruct foreign missionaries connected with them, on these subjects, it is not for this committee to decide. It is obvious, however, that the points on which this Board, after having selected missionaries in whose character and qualifications they confide, should insist, are such as are embraced in the principles already dwelt upon.

These principles, your committee believe, do not interfere with that liberty which Christ designed his ministers should possess, or that responsibility with which he invests them, when he sends them forth to preach his gospel in heathen lands. If missionaries essentially depart from these principles, and persevere in so doing, they should be recalled as incompetent or unfaithful to their trust. How far holding slaves or any thing else involving what is morally wrong, and which still clings to the heathen convert, affects the evidence that a principle of grace has been implanted in his heart, the missionary, in view of his commission, the instructions of the New Testament, and all the circumstances of the case, as they are present before him, must in connection with his church, and under a solemn sense of responsibility to Christ, form his judgment, and on that judgment he must act. Surely no other persons are in circumstances so favorable as he, for deciding and acting correctly. Such freedom and such responsibility in the missionary, your committee believe, cannot be materially abridged, without the most disastrous consequences to the missionary's own happiness and efficiency, and to the welfare of the heathen.

Having gone so fully into an exposition of the principles on

which, in their opinion, the New Testament requires missionaries to proceed in preaching the gospel and administering the Christian ordinances, the committee would now spread before the Board the proceedings of the missionaries, so far as connected with the subject under consideration.

The committee believe that no established system of involuntary servitude prevails among any tribe of North American Indians, where the missionaries of this Board are laboring, except the Cherokees and Choctaws; nor have they been able to learn that any of the missionaries of the Board laboring in foreign lands, have been called to act on the question of receiving those who hold slaves to their churches. The following statements will, therefore, relate to the Cherokee and Choctaw missions. From these, full communications have been received in reply to inquiries addressed to the several missionaries.

Negro slaves appear to have been introduced among those Indians by white men who removed into their country from sixty to eighty years ago, and to have gradually increased in number till the time when the missions of the Board were established among them in 1817 and 1818. By a census taken of the Cherokees in 1820, there were found to be 583 slaves. The number among the Choctaws was probably smaller, though neither the missionaries nor the committee have the means of ascertaining it definitely. Since that time, though the committee are not aware that there has been any census, the number is believed to have been somewhat increased, almost exclusively, however, by births, as there have been few purchases and little trade of any sort in slaves. The number now owned by both tribes may probably be not far from 2,000; while the number of Indians in both is probably about 38,000. These slaves are almost exclusively in the hands of white men or their descendants of mixed blood, very few being possessed by full Indians.

That slavery should exist at all in these tribes, who have suffered so severely from the violation of their own rights by their white neighbors, is deeply to be regretted; and all should earnestly pray that, as social improvement and Christian knowledge are rapidly advancing among them, they may speedily and nobly exemplify the spirit of true philanthropy, as well as the gospel law of love, by showing that they duly appreciate the rights and welfare of the whole race of man.

But slavery had been introduced and was existing there, and in all the adjacent white communities, when the missionaries of the Board entered on their labors among these tribes. They were strangers; no interest was felt in their work as missionaries. They preached the gospel to all whom they found willing to hear them, whatever their complexion or condition. To the slaves and their masters, both generally understanding the English language, they had, at first, more ready access, than to the

full Indians; and hence from among these, when the Spirit of God gave effect to the truth, some of the earliest, most intelligent, and most stable converts were found, such as the Browns, the Lowreys, the Saunderses, and the Folsoms.

Relative to the principles on which professed converts were to be received to the churches, all the missionaries of the Board among the Cherokees and Choctaws seem to have been perfectly unanimous. "Both masters and slaves," says Mr. Butrick, "I received on the same principle, viz. on the ground of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." Mr. Worcester says, "The general principle on which I have voted for the reception of members is, that all are to be received who desire it, and who give evidence of a change of heart." Mr. Wright says, "When any, whether masters or servants, have given evidence of a saving change of heart, of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they have been received." Substantially the same is the language of all the missionaries. On this principle, of receiving to their churches all those, and only those, who gave satisfactory evidence of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they all appear to have proceeded.

Owing to the changes from one church to another which have occurred in both these missions, the whole number of slaveholders received cannot here be stated precisely.

The whole number of the Cherokee tribe is probably about 18,000, and the number of slaves owned by them is probably about 1,000. The whole number of members connected with our churches in this tribe is 240, of whom 15 hold slaves; 21 are themselves slaves, and 4 are free negroes.

The whole population of the Choctaw tribe, including the Chickasaws, is about 20,000. The whole number connected with our churches there is 603; of whom 20 hold slaves, 131 are themselves slaves, and 7 are free negroes. It may also be stated that our brethren of the Moravian, Baptist, and Methodist denominations have churches in both these tribes, to which many, both of Indian and African descent, both masters and slaves, have been received; and of the latter, especially, a much larger proportion have been gathered into their churches than into those connected with our missions. Of the estimated number of slaves in these tribes, it may, however, be stated, that about one in thirteen are connected with the churches under the care of our missions; while of the Indians and other classes of persons, less than one in fifty are embraced in the same churches; showing that the slaves have not, compared with the Indians, been by any means neglected.

In regard to the kind and amount of instruction given by the missionaries in relation to slavery, and the duties of masters and slaves, the missionaries seem substantially to agree. Mr. Byington says, "We give such instructions to masters and ser-

vants as are contained in the epistles, and yet not in a way to give the subject a peculiar prominence. For then it would seem to be personal, as there are usually but one or two slave-holders at our meetings. In private we converse about all the evils and dangers of slavery." Of a similar tenor are the remarks of Mr. Wright. "The instructions, public and private, direct and indirect, have been such as are found in the Bible. As a spiritual watchman, I have wished to comply with that direction in Ezek. iii. 17: 'Therefore hear the word from my mouth and give them warning from me.'"

In opinion and practice on this subject there will undoubtedly be some diversity among those, in different circumstances, who entertain the same views as to the unrighteousness of the system of slavery itself, and the desirableness of having it abolished. The missionaries of this Board among the Cherokees and Choc-taws, and, so far as the committee are informed, all missionaries, of every denomination, laboring in similar circumstances, among those Indians and in all other places, substantially agree in the views and practice presented in the foregoing extracts.

Strongly as your committee are convinced of the wrongfulness and evil tendencies of slave-holding, and ardently as they desire its speedy and universal termination; still they cannot think that, in all cases, it involves individual guilt, in such a manner, that every person implicated in it can, on scriptural grounds, be excluded from Christian fellowship. In the language of Dr. Chalmers, when treating on this point in a recent letter, the committee would say, "Distinction ought to be made between the character of a *system*, and the character of the persons whom circumstances have implicated therewith; nor would it always be just, if all the recoil and horror wherewith the former is contemplated, were visited in the form of condemnation and moral indignancy upon the latter." Dr. Chalmers proceeds to apply this distinction to the subject now under consideration, in the following manner, in which sentiments, substantially, Drs. Candlish and Cunningham, with the whole General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, unanimously concur.\* Slavery, says he, we hold to be a system chargeable with atrocities and evils often the most hideous and appalling which have either afflicted or de-

\* The language of the report, presented by Dr. Candlish, chairman of the committee to whom the subject was referred, and which report, the paper containing it says was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly, is as follows:

"Without being prepared to adopt the principle that, in the circumstances in which they are placed, the churches in America ought to consider slave-holding *per se* an insuperable barrier in the way of enjoying Christian privileges, or an offence to be visited with ex-communication, all must agree in holding that whatever rights the civil law of the land may give a master over his slaves, as *chattels personal*, it cannot but be sin of the deepest dye in him to regard and treat them as such: and whosoever commits that sin in any sense, or deals otherwise with his slaves than as a Christian man ought to deal with his fellow-man, whatever power the law may give him over them, ought to be held disqualified for Christian communion. Farther, it must be the opinion of all, that it is the duty of Christians, when they find themselves unhappily, in the predicament of slave-holders, to aim, as far as it may be practicable, at the manumission of their slaves; and when that cannot be accomplished, to secure them in the enjoyment of the domestic relations, and of the means of religious training.

formed our species; yet we must not therefore say of every man born within its territory, who has grown up familiar with its sickening spectacles, and not only by his habits been inured to its transactions and sights, but who by inheritance is himself the owner of slaves, that, unless he make the resolute sacrifice and renounce his property in slaves, he is, therefore, not a Christian, and should be treated as an outcast from all the distinctions and privileges of Christian society.

Such, substantially, are the views of your committee; and the more they study God's method of proceeding in regard to war, slavery, polygamy, and other kindred social wrongs, as it is unfolded in the Bible, the more they are convinced that, in dealing with individuals implicated in these wrongs, of long standing and intimately interwoven with the relations and movements of the social system, the utmost kindness and forbearance are to be exercised, which are compatible with steady adherence to right principle.

The effect of the introduction of Christian knowledge among these Indians, so far as masters and slaves have come under instruction, has, in the opinion of the missionaries, been highly beneficial, in respect to the character and conduct of both. The condition of the latter has been, they think, greatly meliorated. So far as the amount of labor required of their slaves, the food, clothing, and houses furnished for them, kind social intercourse with them, regard for the domestic and family relations and affections, and for their comfort generally, and opportunities afforded for religious instruction and worship, are concerned, the missionaries think that instances of serious delinquency are very rare among their church members. Should any church member who has servants under him be chargeable with cruelty, injustice, or unkindness towards them; should he neglect what is essential to their present comfort or their eternal welfare; or should he in any manner transgress the particular instructions which the apostles give concerning the conduct of a master, he would be admonished by the church, and unless he should repent he would be excommunicated. Such appear, from their communications, to be the views of our missionaries; and such a course they think their churches would sustain.

In Christian instruction and care, both of their children and their slaves, the missionaries represent these Indian church members as being generally, and often greatly, deficient; but not much more so in respect to the latter than the former. Converts of the first, or even of the second, generation, gathered from communities just entering on a course of intellectual, moral, and social improvement, will seldom so far rise above their former views and habits, or become so far under the control of the new influences brought to bear upon them, as to compare advantageously, in these respects, with nations on which Christian light

has been shining for centuries. Christianity itself, though requiring, and adapted to promote, in those who embrace it, the highest exemplariness in all the duties of life, does not often achieve these great transformations at once. There is to be line upon line—precept upon precept—here a little and there a little—first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear.

Among the Cherokees and Choctaws the church members are but poorly qualified to give religious instruction; and often the slaves—owing to their better knowledge of the English language, and consequently their easier intercourse with the missionaries and others—are more intelligent, on religious subjects, than their masters. Some of the most eminent instances of well-informed, devout, and steadfast piety, in these mission churches, have been among them. Individuals of them have been much respected, and highly useful in meetings for prayer and exhortation.

Some of the slave-holders in these churches have been known to require their slaves to attend meetings and other opportunities for obtaining religious instruction; all are believed to favor their doing so; while none have been known to throw obstacles in their way. Before it was forbidden by law, in 1841, numbers of their slaves were taught to read in Sabbath and some in week-day schools; and such instruction is still, to some extent, given in private. Seven out of fourteen slaves, members of the Fairfield church in the Cherokee country, can read, and one can write. Slaves are sometimes called upon to read the Scriptures and lead in prayer in the families of their masters. One who has been occasionally employed as a helper in the missionary work, highly esteemed for his intelligence and exemplary piety, has been left, by the will of his master, manager of his property, and virtually the guardian of his orphan child and heir.

The committee cannot advert to some of the laws enacted by both the Cherokees and Choctaws, without pain and regret, especially those which prohibit teaching slaves to read, throw impediments in the way of emancipation, restrict slaves in the possession of property, and embarrass the residence of free negroes among them. Laws of this character, though far less stringent than similar laws existing in most of the adjacent slave-holding States, are disapproved and lamented by the church members generally, it is believed, and by many other intelligent Indians, as unjust and oppressive; and they are not rigorously enforced. For these laws, however, neither the missionaries nor the members of the churches under their care, regard themselves as responsible. They could have little or no influence to effect their repeal. Any direct interference of the missionaries would, in their opinion, tend to delay, if not to prevent, rather than to hasten, the accomplishment of the end desired. Changes in these respects are to be brought about by the greater prevalence of hu-

mane and Christian feeling throughout these communities; and the agency of the missionary in effecting them is not to be like that which works out a political revolution, but that which results, by the divine blessing, in great moral changes in the hearts of individual men.

Slavery was introduced among these Indians, and has been regulated by them, in unhappy imitation of their white neighbors in the adjacent States. Whether the Indians will be the first to abolish it, must depend very much on that power from above which shall attend the prevalence of Christian knowledge among them. This consummation, which justice, humanity, and Christian principle demand should be hastened, none, the committee believe, more fervently desire and pray for, than do the missionaries themselves; while yet the committee believe, in agreement with the unanimous opinion of the missionaries, that any express directions from this Board, requiring them to adopt a course of proceeding on this subject essentially different from that which they have hitherto pursued, would be fraught with disastrous consequences to the mission, to the Indians, and to the African race among them.

That the missionaries among these Indians have been faithful in their work seems evident, not only from their own statements, but also from the fact that the Holy Spirit has most remarkably owned and blessed their labors; the hopeful converts among the Choctaws being proportionally more numerous, than those in any other mission connected with the Board, except that at the Sandwich Islands.

In the spirit and with the sentiments of one of our oldest missionaries, who has now spent more than twenty-five years in Christian labors among these Indians—and these are believed to be the sentiments and the spirit of all the missionaries—the committee would close their report.

"I have," he remarks, "been more in the midst of the slaveholding population, and seen more of the pernicious effects of the system among the Indians, than some of my brethren. Viewed in all its bearings, it is a tremendous evil. Its destructive influence is seen on the morals of the master and slave. It sweeps away those barriers which every civilized community has erected to protect the purity and chastity of the family relations. We also see its baneful effects on the rising generation. A great proportion of the red people who own slaves, neglect entirely to train their children to habits of industry, enterprise, and economy, so necessary in forming the character of the parent and the citizen. Slavery, so far as it extends, will ever present formidable obstacles to the right training of the rising generation.

"But what is to be done? Shall we desert our churches and schools, and send back those who compose them to the shades of moral darkness and death, because some among them

own slaves? Is not the Choctaw nation a part of that world into which Christ commanded his disciples to go and preach the gospel to every creature? Can we expect the half-enlightened, half-civilized Choctaws to proceed on this subject in advance of the white people in the States around them? or in advance of those churches in civilized and enlightened communities where slavery exists?

"There can be no prospect of benefitting the slave, in a slave country, without the consent of the owner. The only hope we can have of benefitting either the one or the other, is through the influence of the gospel; and the gospel, to be effectual, must be conveyed in the spirit of meekness and love."

LEONARD WOODS,  
BENNET TYLER,  
REUBEN H. WALWORTH,  
THOMAS W. WILLIAMS,  
CALVIN E. STOWE,  
BENJAMIN TAPPAN,  
DAVID SANFORD,  
JAMES W. McLANE,  
DAVID GREENE.

On the adoption of the foregoing Report, the following gentlemen voted in the affirmative, being all the members of the Board then present:

Theodore Frelinghuysen, Thomas S. Williams, Jeremiah Day, Thomas DeWitt, Thomas McAuley, John Tappan, Henry Hill, Noah Porter, Rufus Anderson, David Greene, Charles Stoddard, William J. Armstrong, Levi Cutter, Nehemiah Adams, Joel Hawes, Elisha Yale, Thomas M. Skinner, Ambrose White, Samuel Fletcher, David Magie, John W. Ellingwood, Charles Walker, Pelatiah Perit, Benjamin Tappan, William R. DeWitt, Isaac Ferris, Thomas W. Williams, William W. Chester, Mark Hopkins, Reuben H. Walworth, Seth Terry, Daniel Dana, Zedekiah S. Barstow, William Darling, Edward W. Hooker, David Mack, William Page, Horatio Bardwell, Ebenezer Alden, Albert Barnes, William Jessup, Artemas Bulard, Anson G. Phelps, Hiram H. Seelye, Aristarchus Champion, Samuel H. Cox, Thomas Punderson, Alvan Bond, John W. Adams, William T. Dwight, Leonard Bacon, Ansel D. Eddy, Joel Parker, J. Marshall Paul, Benjamin Labaree, Joseph Steele, Henry White, William Adams, Joel H. Linsley, William Wisner, William Patton, William W. Stone, Edward Robinson, David L. Ogden, Benjamin C. Taylor, Walter Hubbell, Samuel H. Perkins, Asa T. Hopkins, Selah B. Treat, Linus Child, Henry B. Hooker, John Forsyth, Baxter Dickinson, Calvin E. Stowe.

It was supposed that various other points connected with this general subject would, in the course of the deliberations at the annual meeting, come up for discussion or inquiry. Owing principally to want of time, they were not brought forward; and it is therefore deemed advisable, in connection with the foregoing Report, to spread before the friends of missions a statement of what has actually been done, in relation to all those points in any manner connected with slavery, respecting which impressions

have been entertained in the community unfavorable to the Board, or the missions under its care.

Before taking up particular topics, it may be proper to remark, in general, that it is not necessary to maintain that the missionaries, and those who have been more immediately employed to counsel and direct them, have always pursued the best possible course; though it may be presumed that such has been their aim. Quite probably they have attached too much importance to the difference in the circumstances under which foreign missions are now prosecuted, compared with those of the apostolic missions, and so have been led to shape their plans and efforts too much for operating on communities of men, rather than for the immediate conversion of individuals. Experience has led to the belief that foreign missions are practicable only as their object is, like that of the apostolical missions, the conversion of sinners through the cross of Christ, and placing the converts under a competent ministry. If missionaries to the heathen aim at much beyond this, they are in danger of becoming too much secularized, or entangled in political affairs, or distracted and perplexed with other matters inconsistent with that high degree of spirituality which should be conspicuous in their character and labors, and which is essential to their enjoying the united sympathy and co-operation of the friends of missions at home, or exerting the greatest and best influence on the mind of the heathen abroad. The universal and most powerful tendency among fallen men every where is to be wholly engrossed about the relations of this life—the things of the world and of sense. The great aim of the missionary must be to turn their thoughts towards their spiritual and eternal interests. Probably the more the New Testament is searched for principles and models, and the more the lessons of experience are heeded on this point, the more decidedly will all candid minds be agreed upon it.

Another general remark is, that the committee and the missionaries have regarded it as a fundamental principle, from which they have never swerved from the beginning, that, in accordance with the tenor of the foregoing Report, *the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper are not to be administered to professed converts until they give credible evidence of repentance and faith in Christ; and that these ordinances are not to be withheld from such converts after the evidence of their regeneration is satisfactory to the missionary.* These are the grand New Testament terms of Christian fellowship. Every error in doctrine or morals, not inconsistent with the convert's giving this evidence, as it does not prevent his being received by Christ, should not prevent his being received by the church, and can, among the heathen at least, be best corrected in the church.

It is through the force of this principle, that rulers at the Sandwich Islands have come to the ordinances of the gospel be-

fore they had fully learned to govern their people according to the rules of the gospel. It is through the force of this principle that men of different castes in India have come together around the Lord's table, and there had the feeling of brotherhood towards all who love the Lord Jesus powerfully wrought upon and developed, and so have gained strength and grace to trample the monster under their feet. Moreover, it is through the force of this principle that a number of Cherokees and Choctaws, while yet slave-holders, have been admitted to the same table with a greater number of their slaves. This has been because the missionaries saw evidence, which was satisfactory to them, that these converts from heathenism, though imperfectly enlightened and sanctified, had been actually regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and made members of the household of faith.

In proceeding to remark more particularly on the Board's alleged connection with slavery, a statement will first be made of the manner in which the missionaries have been brought into contact with it.

In conducting the large boarding schools, early established by the Cherokee and Choctaw missions, a great amount of manual labor was unavoidable. The demand was at first attempted to be met by sending out laborers in the character of assistant missionaries. Death, loss of health, and other causes, prevented the success of this arrangement. Free laborers, of a suitable character, could rarely be hired in those parts. If those schools were to be carried forward, the missionaries seemed shut up to the plan of hiring slaves. This, after much consideration, they decided to do, the wishes of the slave, however, always being consulted, and his condition in the mission family being made such that his term of labor there should be a matter of favor and advantage to himself. Some of the missionaries among the Choctaws, as long ago as 1821, made known to the Committee their dissatisfaction with this arrangement, lest it should encourage slavery among the Indians. The subject came up, also, for consideration while Mr. Evarts was on a visit to this mission, and in his judgment the reasons preponderated in favor of continuing to hire slaves. But the opinions on this subject were not perfectly united, either in the mission, or in the Prudential Committee. In the year 1825, those missionaries who had conscientious scruples on the subject of hiring slaves, and allowing the wages to go to their masters, proposed, as a means of relieving their scruples, to make a formal agreement with the master and with the slave, that the latter should work a certain length of time, at a stipulated price per annum, and have his freedom at the end of it. To this proposal, believing it kind in design and correct in principle, the Committee assented; and the missionaries had the satisfaction of seeing several bondmen liberated by this means. The number thus lib-

erated may have been twelve or fifteen. What is of more importance, most of these were hopefully converted, taught to read the sacred Scriptures, and obtained much other useful knowledge, through this voluntary connection with the mission. But about nine years ago, some persons took occasion, from this arrangement, to represent the Board as actually a slave-holding institution, which led the Committee to instruct the missionaries to relinquish the plan, and release from their contract any who might not have completed their engagements. This is the whole of the ground on which the Board has been represented as holding slaves.

In respect to sending forth missionaries who were slave-holders, the following statement will show the origin of the male missionaries and assistant missionaries who have been sent forth by the Board, namely :

|                                                                |    |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----|-------|
| From Maine, . . . . .                                          | 10 |       |
| New Hampshire, . . . . .                                       | 34 |       |
| Vermont, . . . . .                                             | 44 |       |
| Massachusetts, . . . . .                                       | 85 |       |
| Connecticut, . . . . .                                         | 49 |       |
| New York, . . . . .                                            | 71 |       |
| New Jersey, . . . . .                                          | 16 |       |
| Pennsylvania, . . . . .                                        | 17 |       |
| Ohio, . . . . .                                                | 11 |       |
| Illinois, . . . . .                                            | 3  |       |
| From the free States, but not certainly known which, . . . . . | 16 |       |
|                                                                |    | — 356 |
| Delaware, . . . . .                                            | 1  |       |
| Virginia, . . . . .                                            | 5  |       |
| North Carolina, . . . . .                                      | 4  |       |
| South Carolina, . . . . .                                      | 5  |       |
| Kentucky, . . . . .                                            | 3  |       |
|                                                                |    | — 18  |
| Foreign lands, . . . . .                                       |    | 6     |
|                                                                |    | —     |
| Total, . . . . .                                               |    | 380   |

It is the place of nativity which is here indicated. Two of the eighteen accredited to the slave-holding States, though born in them, actually went from Ohio. Excluding these, the number of the missionaries now in the field, who regard the Southern States as their home, is *seven*, only one of whom is believed ever to have owned slaves, and he did not come into the possession of them by purchase. Reference is here had to the Rev. John Leighton Wilson, the pioneer in the West-African mission ; concerning whom, as his name has been so much before the public, it is but just to say, that there is not believed to be any where a more devoted, laborious, self-denying, and high-minded missionary. He explored the ground in 1833, and commenced his mission in 1834. Before his embarkation, pains were taken to ascertain the character of his connection with his slaves, some fif-

teen or twenty in number. His entire repugnance to slavery was soon put beyond question, and also his intention to liberate his slaves as soon as he could effect it in a manner consistent with his views of their claims upon him. When Mr. Wilson embarked for Africa, it was with the intention and expectation of inducing the slaves to follow him to that continent, which, it was thought, would be a good arrangement; and this he effected in respect to all except two, and at a large expense for their outfit, passage, and settlement. The two just referred to refused to go to Africa, or to any one of the Northern States, and his relation to them was therefore continued, necessarily, as it seemed to him, much longer than he desired. At length he was able to make an arrangement in relation to them, which, it was believed, would be entirely satisfactory to all persons. As the circumstances were stated to the Board by one of the secretaries two years ago; and as it was virtually asserted also in the report of the committee on memorials that year, and again last year at Worcester, that no missionary holding slaves was connected with the Board, it is not deemed necessary now to say more than that Mr. Wilson is believed not to be a slaveholder in any sense of the term.

Much has been said of the fact that certain corporate members of the Board are believed to hold slaves. The following statement will present the case as it is. In the year 1833, the synods of Virginia and North Carolina and the synod of South Carolina and Georgia organized boards for foreign missions, with the understanding that the funds and missionaries within their bounds should be at the disposal of the American Board. This movement was generally regarded, at the time, as cause for gratitude to God for thus bringing an accession of force into the field. And even now, who is there but will regret, that the spirit which was then enkindled in the southern churches, did not increase to a brighter and more lasting flame? As a consequence of this movement on the part of these synods, the presidents of the two southern boards and several other influential members were, the following year, elected corporate members of the American Board. Four of these are now living, and two or three of the four, with one or two other members, who were elected nearly twenty years ago, are supposed to be owners of slaves. With the exception that one of these has attended one or two of the annual meetings, they have taken no part in conducting the affairs of the Board. In the year 1837, the Central and Southern Boards, with the great body of the churches embraced within their bounds, withdrew from this Board, and became connected with the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church. Probably these gentlemen seldom think of the merely nominal relation which they sustain to this Board, or

attach too little importance to it themselves, and presume that others do also, to deem it worth while to go through the formality of resigning their places.

Relative to receiving slaves by donation or legacy, it may be stated that there is an indistinct impression, on the part of one of the secretaries, that some slaves were left to the Board as a legacy, about the year 1829; but the name of the parties concerned is not remembered, and the impression is too indefinite to be much relied upon. As far as the remembrance goes, the legacy was at once declined. Certainly the Committee had no action upon it, and neither the slaves nor the avails were received by the Board. Another case occurred in 1833, which was attended to by Dr. Wisner, while he conducted the domestic correspondence. Authority was given to a person to act in behalf of the Board, and it is presumed that Dr. Wisner, in the personal interviews which he had with him, knowing the views of the Committee, instructed him to decline the legacy. It is certain that nothing was ever received into the treasury from it.

In two instances, the one occurring eight or ten, and the other five or six years ago, the Board was made residuary legatee to estates where a portion of the property was in slaves. But in neither of these instances has any portion of the residuum been offered to the Board by the executors, or come in any manner under its control. There has therefore been no opportunity for the Committee or the treasurer to accept or to refuse it. So that neither the Committee nor any officer of the Board has any knowledge, or any reason to believe, that a single dollar, which was the avails of a slave sold, ever came into the treasury. Nor has any slave ever been so given to the Board by donation or legacy, that he could have been lawfully received and made free.

In one of the instances just adverted to, in which the Board was the residuary legatee, the testator, by his will, gave freedom to a company of slaves, and provided for their support. His method of doing it was not, however, consistent with the laws of the State, which, in such a case, regard the slaves so emancipated as the property of the residuary legatee. The Committee adopted what seemed to them the best means, and all the means in their power, to secure continued freedom to those slaves.

This is believed to be a correct history of all that has been done on this point.

On receiving and soliciting donations in the States where slaves are held, the following view has always been taken by the Committee and secretaries: The New Testament seems to require all who have the gospel to aid in giving it to those who are destitute of it; nor does it seem to contain any warrant for forbidding or withholding facilities from, or refusing to co-operate with, any who appear honestly to desire to obey the command of Christ on

this subject; nor does the New Testament seem to discountenance the urging men to perform one class of plain duties, because they very imperfectly perform, or even wholly refuse to perform, other duties which are believed to be incumbent on them. Whatever degree of sinfulness, therefore, may be attributed to slave-holding, there does not seem to be any valid objection against sending soliciting agents among a people, a portion of whom hold slaves, which would not lie against sending them into a community where many are engaged in manufacturing or vending intoxicating drinks, or in Sabbath labors, or in any other course of action violating the principles of piety and good morals and bearing on the acquisition of property; or even sending them into any district where the inhabitants trade extensively with a slave-holding district, and acquire their property in that manner. Entertaining these views, it has always been deemed right, so far as the instructions of the Bible, or any general principles of morals, or any bearings of the subject as a matter of Christian policy, are concerned, to pursue such measures for promoting the missionary spirit among the professed followers of Christ in the Southern States, and inciting them to perform their duty to the heathen, as would be proper in the Northern States; leaving it to other persons to inculcate the performance of other duties at the South, as well as at the North. As a matter of fact, very few agents have been employed in the Southern States for ten years past. When returned missionaries have gone to the South, in the winter, for their health, they have been encouraged to do all they could, according to their best discretion, to promote the missionary spirit wherever they might be.

Reference has sometimes been made to the "receiving agents," who are appointed in every part of the country. With regard to these, it may be remarked that it is not a part of their duty to solicit funds, but only to receive and transmit them; nor, when receiving donations, are they expected to ask questions, "for conscience sake," of any donor; nor does the treasurer at the Missionary House; but, in the absence of proof to the contrary, it is always presumed that gifts to this sacred cause are the result of honest means and proper motives.

It has been often alleged, and doubtless believed, that the Board has taken action, as a matter of business, in relation to subjects connected with other departments of benevolence, or expressed opinions on various social and moral evils; while, in respect to slavery, it has refused to pursue a similar course. For this there is no proper foundation in the history of the annual meetings of the Board. The actual business of the Board, as a deliberative body, has, without any exception, from the first, it is believed, been confined to the work of foreign missions. But as the attendance at the annual meeting became larger, it

seemed necessary to give greater variety and a more popular character to the meeting. From 1834, therefore, to 1840, the secretaries were accustomed, during the meetings, to draw up such resolutions, bearing on the great work of evangelizing the world, as they supposed none would think of objecting to, and of reading them consecutively on the last half day of the session—not as business from the Prudential Committee—not as business, in any sense, but to serve as a basis for short, animated addresses and devotional exercises. There were six or seven series of such resolutions, prepared at as many annual meetings, proposed after the business of the meeting was ended, each series containing from five to nine resolutions. It so happened that, in these forty or fifty resolutions, there were two that have attracted the attention of those who would have the Board take action on the subject of American slavery. One of these, read at Baltimore, in 1835, is as follows :

*“Resolved, That this Board rejoice and give praise to Almighty God, for that increase of Christian activity which is seen in the various institutions established during the last forty years for the prevention of sin in all its forms, and for removing from our guilty and suffering race the evils which sin occasions; that they especially rejoice in the progress of the temperance reform, and of the principles of peace among the nations of Christendom; and that their earnest prayer is, that all these associations may continue to labor with wisdom and energy, and that others may be organized to co-operate with them, until the institutions of Christian benevolence shall present a front as extended as the ravages of sin; and, favored with guidance and power from on high, shall press forward in their joint labors to chase wickedness and misery from the earth.”*

The other was read at Newark, in 1837, and is as follows :

*“Resolved, That, among the signs of the times, indicating the approach of the period, foretold in prophecy, and long desired and looked for by the church of God, when the gospel shall be proclaimed through the world, the Board regard with interest the present general peace of the earth—the extension of commerce and the peaceful arts—the progress of geographical research and discovery—the increasing facilities for inter-communication among different nations by means of railroads and steamboats—the multiplying demands in all parts of the world for sanctified talent and learning—the growing activity and power of the religious press and of public opinion—the progressive subjection of barbarous languages to a written form by means of Christian missions, whereby the first intelligent use of these languages, in the communication of thought and feeling, is to exert a hallowed and elevating influence on those who speak them—and, finally,*

the fact, more and more developed and established, that no sect or denomination of professed Christians can sustain a reputation for Christian character without laboring to extend the institutions and blessings of Christianity to pagan nations."

This practice was interrupted at the annual meeting in Philadelphia, in 1841, by a memorial, from a respectable quarter, deprecating the "studied silence" (as the memorialists called it) of the Board "on the subject of American slavery." The memorial did not make allusion to these resolutions, but it gave occasion to references being made to them, which have been frequent ever since, and often with not a little misapprehension. It must be perceived, however, from the account now given of the design of this class of resolutions, that any such allusion to slavery as the memorialists desired, could not reasonably be expected in resolutions that were intended to sweep harmoniously over all the chords of feeling in the assembly.

It has, however, been deemed suitable for the Board, or for the Prudential Committee, to take public notice, so far as sound discretion would warrant, of any facts, occurrences, or proceedings of men, in the fields of their several missions, which opposed the progress of their labors. Hence they have spoken freely of intemperance, licentiousness, and various outrages at the Sandwich Islands, rather incidentally, however, and as a matter of history, and seldom as calling for any formal action. But in many cases occurring in the eastern world, the exercise of this liberty of public exposure and condemnation has been restrained by a regard for what were the obvious dictates of a sound Christian discretion.

It has often been alleged, as already alluded to, that a "studied silence" respecting slavery has been maintained by the Board and those immediately concerned in transacting its business. This is a misapprehension. There has been no intentional reserve on this subject. All the facts known, relating to those points in which the operations of the Board, or the missions under its care, bore in any manner on slavery, have, when asked for, been promptly and fully stated, both in conversation and writing, excepting only a recent case, where obvious reasons existed for pursuing a different course. The motives or reasons, under the influence of which members of the Board or of the Committee have given their votes, or have acted, on particular subjects, no one, it is presumed, besides themselves, has felt authorized or competent to give. All has been said which it was supposed to be proper for a missionary institution to say, organized on such principles and for such an object as the Board. It was not organized for the purpose of exerting an influence against slavery by expressing opinions on that subject. Examining and

deciding hypothetical cases before-hand has always been avoided, it being deemed sufficient to decide cases which actually occur, each on its own merits, and according to the best light which can be had upon it at the time. Any other course than this would, it is believed, be undignified and unbecoming, and not only cause perplexity and disagreement among the friends of missions, but, before the lapse of many years, would undoubtedly and justly cause to be withdrawn from the Board the confidence and respect of all its real friends.

It seems often to be intimated, that those more immediately concerned in conducting the affairs of the Board and the missions under its care, have had little regard for the Scriptures, or Christian principle, or the dictates of conscience, or the claims of humanity, in the course they have pursued; that they have adopted a time-serving, compromising policy, without any definite, well-considered reasons for their measures, unless it be to secure the favor and the contributions of those who hold slaves, and perhaps avoid doing what was desired by those denominated abolitionists; and that, therefore, they can change their views and measures without any sacrifice of principle. If such is the opinion of any, it is wholly a misapprehension. It is hardly possible to conceive of any inducement for transacting the business of the Board and the missions, on such principles as these. If those engaged in this agency possess any honesty, their object is to spread a knowledge of the gospel and give it effect on the minds of the heathen as widely and rapidly as possible. Attempting this in a manner not approved and blessed by the Head of the church, they must know will be utterly in vain. The fact is, that whatever has been done, in any manner connected with slavery, has been done deliberately, in view of what were deemed sufficient reasons, and because it was believed to be right and conformed to the principles of the Scriptures and an enlarged Christian philanthropy. A desire to secure the favor or the contributions of one portion of the community, or to manifest antipathy to another portion, has never been among the motives which have governed the action taken on this subject. A course different from that pursued could not have been adopted, without violating settled convictions of duty and doing what was believed to be wrong. Perseverance in that course has not, therefore, been the result of obstinacy, or inconsideration, or compromise. The manner in which some of the missions came into contact with slavery, was, as has been already intimated, brought to the notice of the Committee nearly twenty-five years ago; and the subject has since, especially during the last ten years, been often called up, in some shape, for renewed consideration. It may be supposed, therefore, that principles and a course of proceeding have been arrived at, which are believed

to be conformed to the instructions and examples of the New Testament, so far as they can be applied, and to be Christian and humane in their spirit and tendency.

The idea that the Prudential Committee has restrained the missionaries in the expression of their anti-slavery views, is without the least foundation in fact. The missionaries are and have ever been as free to write on this subject, as any ministers in the United States. Not a word has ever been written or said by the Committee or Secretaries to check them in this thing, unless exhorting them to make the conversion of the heathen to Christ their great business, be so considered; and indeed there has rarely, if ever, been occasion for any such restraint with respect to the missionaries now actually connected with the Board. An anti-slavery society was formed, some years ago, at the Sandwich Islands, by members of the mission; but whatever might have been thought of the expediency of forming such a society in those remote islands, it is not remembered that the thing has ever been alluded to, one way or another, in letters to that mission.

The rule adopted by the Board at Newark in 1837, "that no mission, or member of a mission, may print any letter, tract, or appeal, at the printing establishments connected with the missions, *at the expense of the Board*, with a view to its being sent to individuals or communities in the United States," was designed to prevent a very manifest, though undesigned, misapplication of funds; but the printing which gave rise to this rule, was all concerning the work of missions, and had no reference whatever to slavery. Slavery indeed is a subject, on which there has never been any misunderstanding or difficulty between the Committee or other officers of the Board and the missionaries, at the Sandwich Islands, or in any other field. Even the four brethren, of the mission just named, who asked a release from their connection with the Board, did not allude to the subject in any letters received from them at the Missionary House, so far as can be found during all their connection with the Board; and it has never been supposed that this subject was among the causes which had an influence in leading them to desire a separation from the Board.

It has lately been intimated, that Mr. Evarts edited the Missionary Herald on very different principles from those which have obtained since his time, opening its columns not merely to a notice of proceedings by others in behalf of great questions of Christian morals, but to a frank expression of opinion in regard to them, and an earnest and fearless advocacy of them. A few words on this point may be proper. In the first place there is an exaggeration in the statement. But without dwelling upon

that, it should be remarked, that from the organization of the Board in 1810 to January 1821, the *Missionary Herald*, which was an integral part of the *Panoplist*, was the private property of Mr. Evarts, and conducted by him in his private capacity, and on his individual responsibility; and that in the manner of conducting it the Board was in no way involved, except so far as its official documents were contained in it, and Mr. Evarts was acting as its treasurer. Since 1821 the editorial matter in the *Herald* has been principally prepared by other persons. One of the present Secretaries began his agency in it early in the year 1822, and another commenced his at the beginning of the year 1827. It has ever been an untrammelled agency, and the principle articles referred to in proof of the allegation were spontaneously inserted *by Secretaries now living*, and not by Mr. Evarts. The notices of books from the year 1821 down to the time of his decease, were all inserted, it is believed, by them; and so were the notices of temperance and of the Sabbath, in the year 1828, which have been singled out; and so, it is believed, have been all the notices of the anti-slavery and colonization societies, that have appeared for three or four-and-twenty years past. The *Missionary Herald* has a character of its own; and while some curtailment in the miscellaneous matter has been inevitable, owing to the increase and pressure of interesting intelligence from the missions, it has ever been an object and settled purpose, so far as the editors were concerned, to preserve that character unchanged. They have not hearkened, therefore, to the opponents of colonization, on the one hand, some of whom would have had the Colonization Society excluded from the annual notices of benevolent societies; nor have they hearkened to southern remonstrants, on the other, who have repeatedly called upon them to do the same with the Anti-Slavery Society. Those notices were designed to give a fair historical and statistical view of what was going forward in the various departments of benevolent action, without involving the Board with one party or another, on those or any kindred subjects. It is confidently believed that the *Herald* is the same now, in all important respects, as Mr. Evarts himself desired it to be, while he was laboring in connection with the Board.

The present officers of the Board approved of Mr. Evarts devoting what time and strength he actually did, (which was not very much) to the cause of tracts, education, the Sabbath, and some other general public interests—saying nothing of the Cherokee and Choctaw Indians; for what he did for them came directly in his path as Secretary. Such had been Mr. Evarts's situation in the community for many years, and such his relations to these various objects, and such his education and habits, that it was no doubt sometimes his duty to step aside from his

main business to take a prominent agency in connection with them. And this he could do, in that early stage of the foreign missionary enterprise, and while assistant secretaries were aiding in the editorial and epistolary labors of the Missionary Rooms. But it cannot be, that an intelligent community will regard it as a criminal defect in the present Secretaries, with a greatly increased official business and responsibility, and no such special calls upon them individually as there were upon him, if they do not turn aside to labor for the Tract Society, the Education Society, the National Sabbath Society, the Temperance Society, the Anti-slavery Society, etc. etc. The fact is, the great departments of benevolent operations are now all organized, and have their plans formed and their agents in the field, and their channels of communication opened with the public; and if they had not, the Secretaries of the Board have as much as they can do, and ought to devote no more time to other objects, than is needful to preserve their mind and heart from being so engrossed in one object, however great, as would prevent their conducting that on those principles which an enlarged and candid estimate of its comparative importance and relations to other kindred objects would require.

The foregoing statement is submitted to the friends of missions to the heathen as a fair view of the facts, on all important points, so far as is remembered, having any relation to slavery, in respect to which unfavorable impressions have been entertained concerning the proceedings of the Board and officers, or the missionaries under its care.

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To the foregoing statement, it may be proper to append the Reports on this general subject, adopted by the Board at its annual meetings, in 1842 and 1844, as they present important principles which have governed its proceedings hitherto, and by which it seems necessary to abide. The former Report is as follows :

The case of the Rev. John Leighton Wilson, a missionary of the Board to West Africa. It is stated in a letter from Mr. Wilson, that six years ago, and subsequently to his entering on the missionary work, he sustained the legal relation of owner to a number of slaves, who fell to him in consequence of a bequest made before his birth; that he had offered to emancipate them, either in this country or in Liberia, and had done all which he deemed suitable to terminate a relation painful and burdensome to himself, while they had steadfastly refused; and that he was,

at the time mentioned, desirous still to emancipate these slaves, if any mode could be pointed out, which should be just and kind to them. Whether Mr. Wilson has emancipated them, or what their situation has been during the last six years, or what it now [1842] is, your committee have no information. They understand, however, that the Secretaries of the Board have written to him, making inquiries on these points. With their present want of information, your committee deem it necessary to say nothing more, than that Mr. Wilson appears to have intended to act conscientiously and humanely, relative to the slaves under his care. Still, if his relation to them is not already terminated, your committee think it very desirable that it should be with as little delay as circumstances will permit; and they cannot but think that he will ere long be able, with such counsel and aid as the Prudential Committee may give, to accomplish the object in a manner satisfactory to himself, and kind and beneficial to them. More information must be obtained before further action can properly be had.

Your committee have no knowledge that any other missionary under the patronage of the Board stands in a similar relation to slavery.

This Board, at their last annual meeting, in reply to a memorial from New Hampshire, endeavored very plainly to set forth the principles which have governed their proceedings, and the views they entertain respecting the general object of these memorials; and it was our hope that the course which was pursued would prove satisfactory to all concerned. And here your committee know not what better they can do, than to advert very briefly to the leading points contained in the report then adopted.

It was stated that this Board was incorporated for the express "purpose of propagating the gospel in heathen lands, by supporting missionaries and diffusing a knowledge of the Scriptures;" that the Board have confined their efforts to this *one great object*; and that a regard to our sacred trust requires us to pursue the object with undivided zeal, and to guard watchfully against turning aside from it or mixing any other concerns with it. We referred to other works of benevolence, but insisted that *our appropriate work is to, propagate the gospel among the unevangelized*. It was then, and still is, our deliberate conviction, that we are called by Divine Providence to adhere steadily to the plan of operation which has been adopted, and that the only way for us to prosper in our work, is to direct all our proceedings, as a Board, and all the labors of our missionaries, to the one specified object of our organization. We think that our Lord and Master, and the Christian world now and in after ages, will approve this our deliberate course of action, and that we could not be justified in departing from it.

In the report adopted last year, we moreover expressed our

opinion, that, considering the character of this Board and the nature of its object, it may fairly be presumed, that the funds contributed to our treasury, are obtained in a proper manner and given from proper motives; and that it is at least manifest that we cannot examine into the motives of those who sustain our operations, or into the origin of the funds which are contributed in furtherance of our object. We think no man, who well considers the subject, can judge differently from us on this point. As to the methods which the Prudential Committee are pursuing to secure funds, we know of nothing which any one could think exceptionable.

From a hearty desire to satisfy the feelings of the ministers of the gospel, who sent us the memorial from New Hampshire, we also said with perfect frankness, "*that the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions can sustain no relation to slavery which implies approbation of the system, and as a Board, can have no connection or sympathy with it,*" plainly intimating also that we consider it as one of the obvious evils which exist in the community, but the removal of which, though we regard it as an object of fervent desire and prayer, does not fall within our province as a Missionary Board. These are our settled principles.

It is alleged by the memorialists that the Board has departed from these principles, and has expressed opinions relative to other prevailing evils. Respecting intemperance, licentiousness, Indian oppression, and some other hinderances to the progress of Christianity, as they prevailed in the countries where the missions of the Board are established, and powerfully counteracted the labors of the missionaries, and in some instances subjected them to great peril, the Board has stated the facts as they occurred, and in various forms, more or less explicit, has uttered the language of condemnation. These evils, existing in the countries where the missions are operating, and standing directly in the way of the Board's accomplishing its object, were of course, legitimate and proper subjects for its animadversion. If it has at any time gone further than this, and expressed opinions relative to immoralities or evils of any kind, prevailing in this country, and not directly counteracting the labors of the missionaries, your committee regard such action as a departure from the great principles on which the Board was organized, and by which they think its proceedings should always be governed.

And now what more shall we say? Should we undertake to do justice to our own views on all the particular subjects hinted at in these memorials, it would occupy more time than can be afforded on this occasion, and would naturally lead on to discussions in which this Board cannot engage, and which must be left to those who may write and speak on their own individual responsibility.

It should be kept in mind, that the work of this Board has not been done in a corner. Its proceedings are open to the scrutiny of the public. Any one who will examine the matter, will have no need to inquire of us what are our principles and our modes of action. They are written in our various Reports and other printed documents. They are exhibited in noon-day light in the extensive fields we occupy, and in the success with which the God of missions has mercifully crowned our feeble efforts.

The difficulties which we have found it necessary to encounter have been innumerable, and our hearts have many a time been ready to yield to discouragement. Out of the depths we have often cried unto the Lord; and he hath heard our voice, and hath called forth songs of thanksgiving and praise.

And now, feeling ourselves bound forever to this sacred and momentous cause, and being resolved, in the best use of the powers which God has given us, and with the co-operation of his people and the help of his grace, to go straight forward in our work, we affectionately invite all who love the cause of missions, and who can conscientiously assist us with their prayers and their charities, to join with us in our undertaking, and to share with us in our labors, our trials, and our pleasures. But if any are so dissatisfied with our principles or our proceedings, that they deem it their duty to promote the spread of the gospel through some other channel, we shall indeed be sorry to be deprived of the help they might afford us; but we do not wish to curtail their liberty.

The Report adopted by the Board, at the annual meeting in 1844, is as follows:

The petitions referred to the committee are three, and two of them are without date. In the first and second, this Board are requested and urged to take measures to prevent receiving into their treasury any moneys contributed, in one way or another, by slave-holders, or any of the avails of slave labor. In the other we are desired also to pass resolutions declaring that "American slavery is a sin against God and man, and ought to be immediately abolished; and that we will not employ missionaries or agents who are slave-holders."

In regard to the above request as to missionaries and agents, this committee are not able to find what reason the petitioners can have for making such a request, as it is not known that there is at present any complaint, or any ground of complaint, against the doings of the Board in respect to this subject, inasmuch as they have no missionaries or agents who are slave-holders. We did suppose that the particular and full information which has

been given of late on this subject is, and must be, satisfactory to the friends of the cause in which we are engaged.

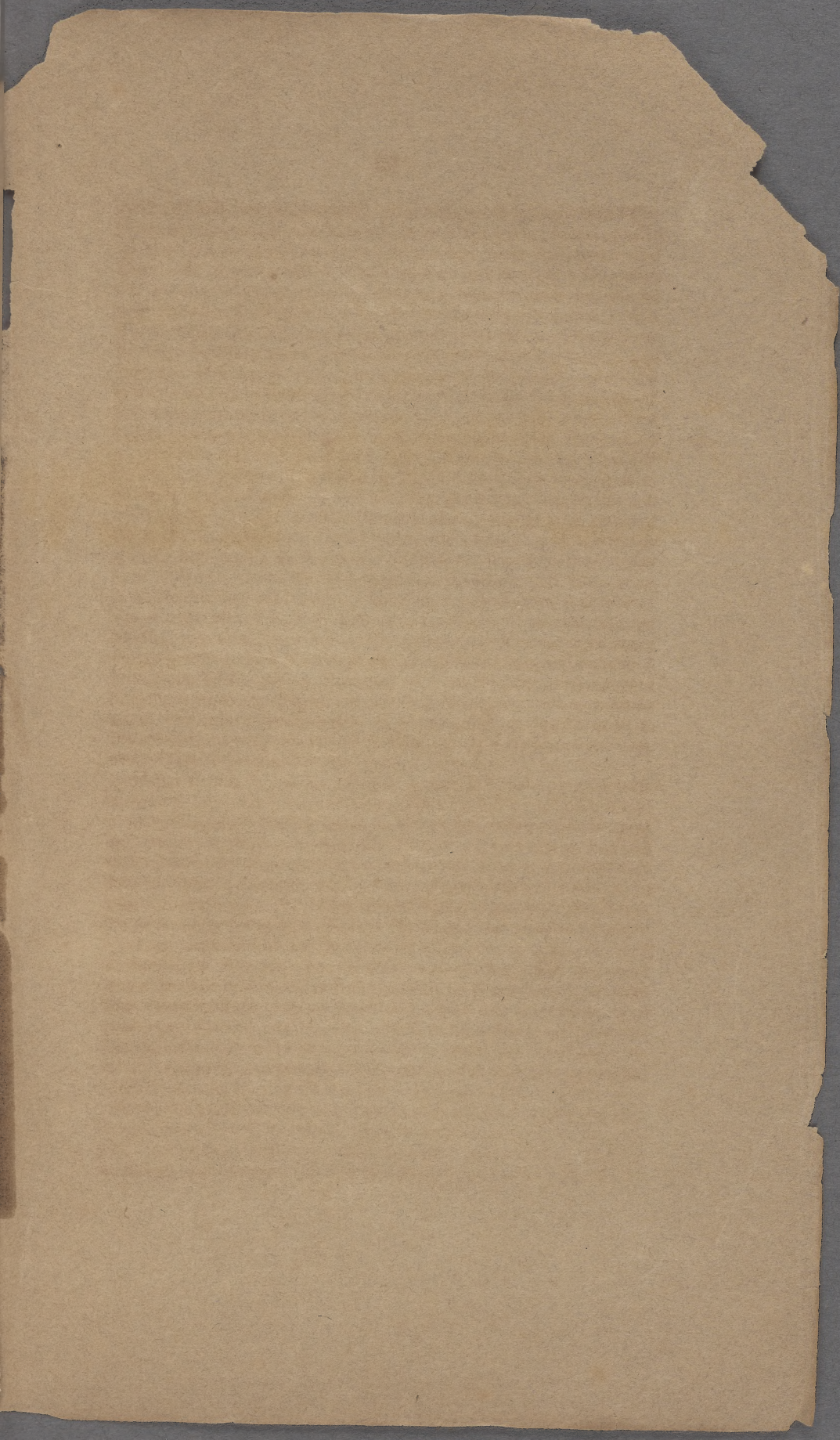
As to the other subjects touched upon in these two petitions, that is, the declaration we are requested to make as to slavery, and the measures we are requested to adopt, the committee are unable to recommend any thing more, and they think the Board would not be inclined to do any thing more, than to refer the petitioners to the reports which have been made and unanimously accepted on the same subjects at previous meetings. In those reports the Board have set forth, as plainly as possible, the views they entertain on these subjects, and the principles which have governed their proceedings. They have stated, what is never to be forgotten, that the Board was established and incorporated for the express purpose of propagating the gospel in heathen lands, by supporting missionaries and diffusing a knowledge of the Scriptures; that the Board have confined themselves to *this one great object*, and that a regard to our sacred trust requires us to pursue the object with undivided zeal, and not to turn aside from it, or mix any other concerns with it. And we still think that the Lord of missions and the Savior of the world will approve of this deliberate purpose of ours and this course of action, and would frown upon us, if we should depart from it. And we have the comfort to believe, also, that this is the only purpose and course of action which will give permanent satisfaction to the Christian community, who are enlisted in the cause of missions; being fully persuaded that any essential departure from this plan of operation would tend to defeat the great end we are pursuing, —the conversion of the heathen.

As to the moneys contributed by slave-holders, it is still our opinion that, considering the character of the Board, and the nature of its objects, it may fairly be presumed that the funds contributed to our treasury are obtained in a proper manner, and contributed from right motives; and that it is very manifest that we cannot properly examine into the motives of those who sustain our operations; and that an attempt to do this would be marked with absurdity, and would plunge us into difficulties from which we could not be easily extricated.

It will not, we trust, be overlooked that, in reply to previous petitions, the Board has repeatedly and very frankly declared that *they can sustain no relation to slavery which implies approbation of the system, and, as a Board, can have no connection or sympathy with it*; "plainly intimating that we consider it one of the obvious evils which exist in the community, but the removal of which, though we regard it as an object of fervent desire and prayer, does not fall within our province as a missionary Board." We know not how any man, who maturely considers the subject, can desire more than this. And it is quite certain that, without a change of views, the Board can do nothing beyond this.

The Prudential Committee, the Secretaries, and the Members of this Board, are manifestly enlisted in one of the greatest, most benevolent, and most successful enterprises ever undertaken by man. We glory in the cross of Christ. We glory in that work for the salvation of men, and the approaching conversion of the world, which depends upon that cross, and results from it. We most heartily invite Christians to unite with us, and shall thank and honor all who help to sustain this pious undertaking, and who contribute of their property and their prayers to aid this blessed cause. With any of our brethren who are dissatisfied with our doings, we can have no controversy or contention. We cannot turn aside from our arduous work for the purpose of strife. We have no time for strife; and our Lord forbids us to engage in strife. If any of our brethren soberly think that they can do the will of God, and advance his cause in some other way better than by joining their efforts with ours, we will be so far from complaining of them for following their own convictions, that we will pray God to guide them by wisdom from above, and will rejoice in all they do to spread the gospel of Christ.

The last petition above mentioned refers to a new subject, that is, the existence of slavery among some of our missionary churches, particularly among the Choctaws and other Indian tribes, and requests that the Board would take measures to ascertain the facts in the case. In conformity with this request, the committee have made use of all the means in their power, and some of them of special importance, in order to ascertain these facts. And, so far as they are at present informed, they see no reason to charge the missionaries among the Choctaws, or any where else, with either a violation or neglect of duty. But it has been impossible, in so short a time, to obtain that exact and complete information on the subject which is indispensably necessary to a full and satisfactory report. The committee must, therefore, for the reason suggested, ask the Board to receive what is now offered, as their report in part on the above-mentioned memorials, and request that they may have time to make a thorough inquiry into the state of the churches in our various missionary stations in regard to slavery, and, with the help of the information thus obtained, to prepare a report on this part of the subject committed to them, to be presented to the Board at their next annual meeting. And may the Lord grant that, on this and on every subject relating to the high and holy work of the world's salvation, all who love the name of Jesus may be of the same mind and judgment, and love one another with pure hearts fervently.



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